

Town Hall Meetings on Rural Health

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, through Community Asset Builders LLC, will be scheduling 15 town hall meetings around the state to obtain public input on rural health issues for the development of its Rural Health Plan.

Scheduling of meetings will begin in October 2009 and conclude in June 2010 for the following cities: Fairfax, Milan, Macon, Memphis, Bowling Green, Clinton, Lexington, Versailles, Fulton, Potosi, Neosho,

Ava, Eminence, New

Madrid and Poplar Bluff. Currently, meetings are scheduled in Lexington on November 10, 2009 and Fulton on February 1, 2010. All meetings will be advertised in local media outlets and through associations. If your city

is not listed, and you would like to host a meeting, please contact Barbara Brendel, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health at 573-526-9687 or by e-mail at Barbara.Brendel@dhss.mo.gov. Additional meetings will be held, if there is interest.

this issue includes:

The Latest on H1N1

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> A publication of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services



The Latest on H1N1

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continues to update information about the H1N1 flu virus. It is the first virus officially declared a pandemic in more than four decades.

Vaccine makers are working feverishly to produce an effective vaccine for the illness, because experts expect it to spread quickly this fall and winter.

Researchers say most people have no immunity to the virus, although studies indicate that many people 65 and older seem to have some resistance. Researchers agree that some groups are more at risk for severe illness than others. They include pregnant women, children, teens, young adults and individuals with chronic diseases. These groups are encouraged to be vaccinated as soon as the vaccine becomes available.

Some basic guidelines that may help you and your loved ones avoid H1N1 include frequent hand washing, coughing into a tissue or the crook of your arm rather than into your hands, avoiding large crowds, and trying not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth to avoid spreading germs.

For the latest information on the H1N1 virus, check out the Department of Health and Senior Services website at www.dhss.mo.gov/BT_Response/_ H1N1Flu.html, or visit the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov.

Planning and Precautions for Fire Safety

Thousands of lives are lost each year to fires and thousands more are left with injuries and scars for life. Planning ahead for what to do if a fire strikes your home is the best way to protect your family from tragedy.

Start by taking precautionary steps to ensure your home is safe. Check all the electrical appliances, cords, and outlets for breaks or overloading. Check light fixtures to make sure the bulbs are the correct wattage. Find out if your home has ground-fault circuit interrupters that will prevent electrical shock and fires. If an appliance ever sparks, it's time to get rid of it.

Other tips to follow are never run electrical wires under rugs. Carefully read and follow the directions for using portable heaters. Keep fireplaces cleaned, covered, and always make sure fires are burned out before leaving your home or going to bed. The same goes for candles. Don't

allow anything to touch a nightlight. Be extremely careful when using an electric blanket.

In addition to prevention, it's important to take physical precautions to help you escape a fire if one starts. The best way to do that is to install numerous smoke detectors in your home and frequently make sure they're operating correctly. A good rule of thumb to remember with smoke detectors is to change the batteries at daylight savings time, twice a year. It is suggested that you test your smoke detector once a month. It only takes a few minutes of planning to save the rest of your life. More than half of all fatal fires happen in homes without smoke detectors. They should be located near bedrooms so they will be loud enough to wake the sleeping. Test this out sometime when the rest of your family is asleep to see how long it takes them to

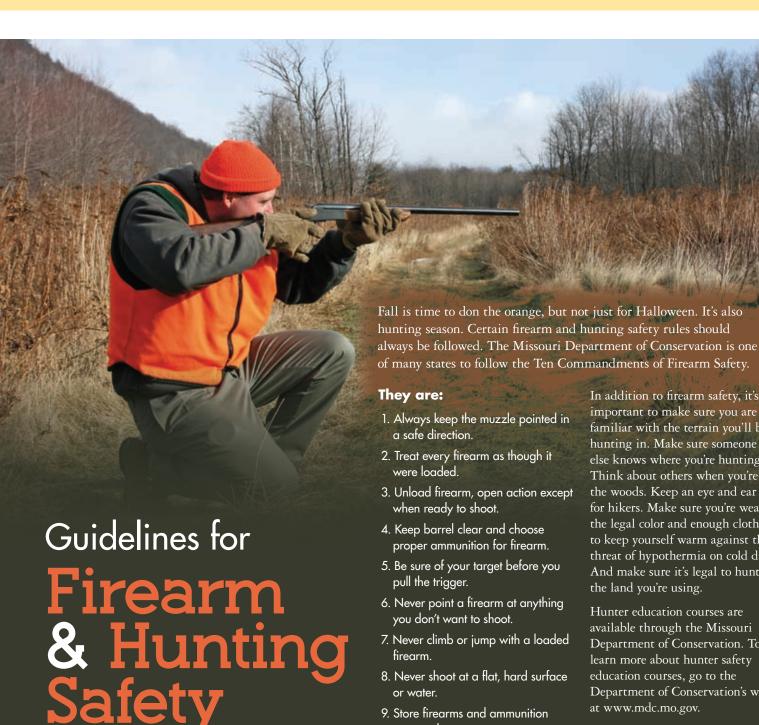
stir from hearing the sound. And make

an escape plan. Then practice it together. Visit firesafety.gov online for more tips about fire safety.



ONE MINUTE TO STRESS RELIEF:

Put your hand on your belly, just below your belly button and feel yourself breathe in and out. Breathe in, then hold for a count of three. Breathe out, then hold for a count of three. Continue to take deep breaths for one minute, pausing for a count of three after each inhalation and exhalation. You'll be giving your body extra oxygen and a sense of calm that may last the rest of the day.



8. Never shoot at a flat, hard surface

9. Store firearms and ammunition

10. Avoid alcohol and drugs before

and during shooting.

or water.

separately.

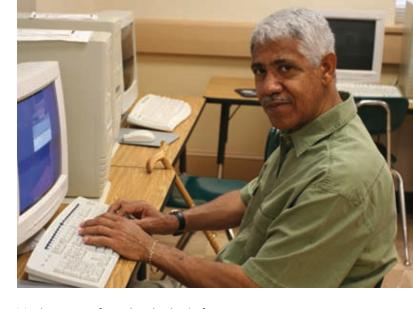
familiar with the terrain you'll be else knows where you're hunting. Think about others when you're in the woods. Keep an eye and ear out for hikers. Make sure you're wearing the legal color and enough clothes to keep yourself warm against the threat of hypothermia on cold days. And make sure it's legal to hunt on

Department of Conservation. To education courses, go to the Department of Conservation's website at www.mdc.mo.gov.

A Resource for Individuals with Disabilities

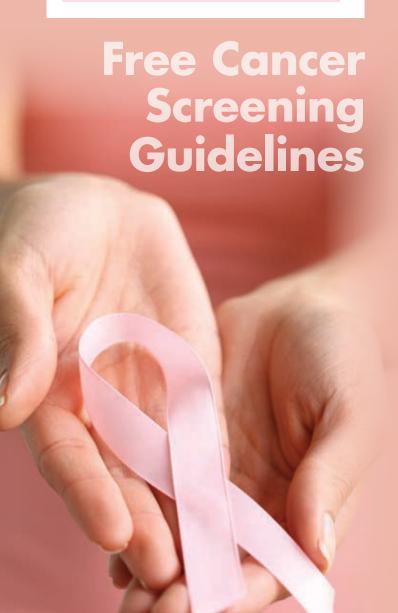
The U.S. Department of Labor has launched Disability.gov, a redesigned federal Website connecting more than 50 million Americans with disabilities to thousands of trusted resources on disability-related issues, programs and services. Formerly known as DisabilityInfo.gov, the site has been completely redesigned and updated with new social media tools, such as a blog and a Twitter feed, to encourage feedback and interaction among visitors. Disability.gov is not just for Americans with disabilities, but also for parents of children with disabilities, employers, workforce and human resource professionals, veterans, educators, caregivers and many others.

Disability.gov features comprehensive information from 22 federal agencies, as well as educational institutions, non-profit organizations and state and local governments.



Topics covered on the site include:

benefits; civil rights; community life; education; emergency preparedness; employment; health; housing; technology; and transportation.



The Show Me Healthy Women program (SMHW) is a great resource for free breast and cervical cancer screenings. Guidelines have been announced for 2009-2010 eligibility. The following is information about who can participate:

Age Guidelines:

Women Age 50 to 64 or older without Medicare Part B:

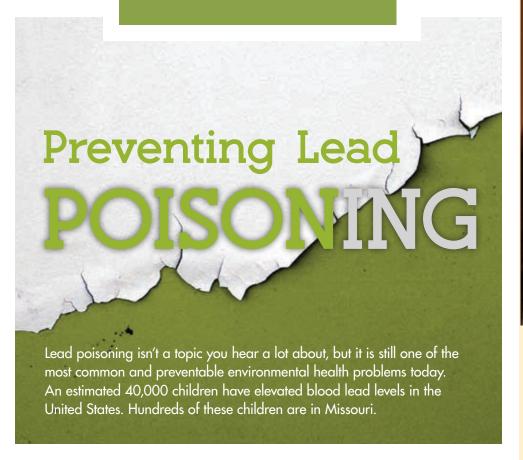
 Are eligible for a clinical breast examination (CBE), a mammogram, plus a pelvic examination and Pap test.

Women Age 35-49:

- Are eligible for a pelvic examination, Pap test, and CBE.
- Are eligible for diagnostic breast services if the CBE results are suspicious for cancer.
- Are eligible for diagnostic cervical services if their initial/follow-up cervical cancer screening (Pap test) was abnormal and was provided by a participating provider or through outside referrals with Pap test results of High Grade SIL or worse.

Cervical cancer screenings for women who have had a hysterectomy:

- Due to cervical cancer or dysplasia, are eligible for CBE, pelvic examination, and Pap test.
- Due to any reason other than cervical cancer or dysplasia, are eligible for one Pap test and pelvic examination to determine the absence or presence of the cervix.
- Due to conditions other than cervical cancer or dysplasia and the cervix is absent, are eligible for a CBE.



Lead mining and smelting is an important part of Missouri's history. Our state became the dominant leadproducing state in the nation in 1907. It has remained number one ever since. The shiny silver colored metal is found naturally in the earth's crust. It has been used in paints, gasoline, and some vinyl products, such as mini-blinds. Despite the discontinuation of the use of lead in these products, recycling old items or living in a home built before 1978 can present a health hazard. Fine particles of processed or recycled lead or lead dust become dangerous when they are taken into the body through breathing or swallowing. Children

under the age of six are at the highest risk for lead poisoning. The illness can damage a child's brain or bones for life. It's important to know how to prevent lead poisoning and also to be aware of symptoms that arise with lead exposure.

Many lead poisoning symptoms are similar to those of other illnesses, such as the flu. The best way to detect lead poisoning is through blood tests.

If you are interested in teaching children about lead poisoning prevention, you can find children's activities on the Department of Health and Senior Services website at www.dhss.mo.gov/ChildhoodLead/.

Prevention Tips

- Minimize your child's exposure to paint.
- Wash any toys your child may put in their mouth.
- Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter.
- Take your shoes off when you get home to avoid tracking outside lead particles into your home.

Symptoms of Lead Poisoning

Headache
Stomachache
Irritability
Fatigue
Loss of appetite
Joint pain



Unfortunately not everyone has the best intention for your children. That's why teaching them about stranger danger should be a top priority throughout their young years. As a parent, you should remind them often of the safety rules that will keep them safe.

Here are a few:

- Have conversations about staying close by before you enter a public place.
- Teach children not to open house or car doors to strangers or even people they know without a parent or caregiver's permission.
- Explain to them how to scream and run away from a threatening person. Teach them who is safe to seek help from, such as a police officer or store employee.
- Make sure your children know how important it is that they let you know where they are or where they're going to be at all times.
- Practice possible scenarios that could arise such as a stranger trying to give your child candy or show them a puppy. Go over different ways to react in each situation.

Missouri Announces

Outstanding Older Worker Regional Winners

Missouri's 19th Annual Older Worker of the Year contest has selected regional winners. This contest seeks to honor a Missouri resident who is 65 or older, employed at least 20 hours a week, and displays dependability and new skills on the job. The annual Older Worker of the Year recognition is sponsored by the Missouri Senior Employment Coordinating Committee, consisting of the AARP Foundation; Experience Works; Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph; MERS/Missouri Goodwill Industries; Department of Economic Development/Division of Workforce Development; and the Department of Health and Senior Services/Division of Senior and Disability Services.



- Region 1 Katherine Bruns is the Office Manager at Slayton Chiropractic Health Center in St. Joseph, MO.
- **Region 2 Rita Brunk** is Lead Cook at the Schuyler County Council on Aging's nutrition site.
- **Region 3 Richard Breidenbaugh** is employed by the Clay County Highway Department.
- Region 4 Joy Ernestine Westerhold is employed by James C. Kirkpatrick Library, University of Central Missouri.
- **Region 5** Hazel Willet is employed by State Representative Joe Aull.
- Region 6 Beatrice Hollander is employed by St. Louis Central Missouri Career Center.
- **Region 7 Josephine (Jo) Shiner** is employed at the Area Agency on Aging in Joplin.
- Region 8 Mary Clapper is Assistant Director of Nursing and Clinical Supervisor at Sonshine Manor.
- Region 10 Wilma Dean Holder is employed by 1st Baptist Church Wee Care Daycare as a teacher for toddlers age one to three years.
- Region 11 Billy Wayne Bell is employed by Hayti R-II school district as a part-time bus maintenance worker.
- Region 12 Eartha Ersery is employed by Black Health Care Coalition Inc. as staff coordinator for agency-sponsored event; most notably, the Mammography Program.
- **Regions 13, 14,15 Neil Bingaman** is employed by Mid-East Area Agency on Aging.

You can learn more about the regional winners and find out who won the Older Worker of the Year Award by visiting the Bureau of Senior Programs online at www. dhss.mo.gov.



Breastreeding Helps Keep Babies Healthy in Emergencies

Caring for a baby can be a challenge, but mothers who breastfeed help keep their infants healthy even under the most difficult circumstances.

The advantages of breastfeeding during an emergency are great. A natural or man-made disaster can contaminate water supplies and shut down stores for days at a time, making it difficult to prepare formula or obtain new supplies. Health officials say planning ahead is the key to keeping family members safe and healthy during an emergency, and breastfeeding can be a part of those plans.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding infants exclusively for the first six months of life. The Academy recommends that babies continue to be breastfed - while solid food is being introduced - until the baby is at least a year old.

Here are just a few of the benefits babies get from breastfeeding:

- Fewer health problems such as diarrhea, ear infections, respiratory infections and urinary tract infections.
- Fewer problems with allergies and asthma; and
- Are less likely to become obese as they grow older.

Mothers benefit as well. Breastfeeding boosts a woman's immune system, reduces bleeding after childbirth and helps her return to her pre-pregnancy weight sooner. Women who breastfeed also have increased protection from osteoporosis and breast, uterine and ovarian cancer.

In addition to the health benefits, breastfeeding also has economic advantages. Depending on the brand of formula used and the amount a baby eats, breastfeeding can save a family \$1,500 to \$3,500 a year. Health care costs also tend to be lower. A study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that more than \$1 billion in extra medical costs is incurred every year in the United States to treat infants who are not breastfed.

For more information, head online to www.dhss.mo.gov/breastfeeding or call 1-800-877-6246.

With Just a Click, Determine Your Risk

Do you know if you have high blood pressure, if you are at risk for heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney disease? The Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, in partnership with the American Heart Association, is offering a free online risk assessment calculator.

The calculator uses your height, weight, blood pressure and other factors to determine your risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure, and kidney disease. The risk calculator also estimates how lifestyle changes such as reducing your sodium and daily exercise can lower blood pressure and other health risks.

After taking the test, the risk assessment calculator generates a report that you can take to your next doctor's appointment.

The risk assessment only takes a few minutes. So why not just click on www.dhss.mo.gov/HighBloodPressure/ to determine your risk.

Correcting Health Myths

Bananas are fattening.

fruit has a thicker consistency
than its juicier counterparts
doesn't make it fattening. The
average banana only has a half
a gram of fat in it. The key to
remember is moderation.
It is possible to have too
much of a good thing.

Office of Primary Care and Rural Health at 800-891-7415

